

Town of Orleans Board of Selectmen/Park Commission Policy regarding the use of fertilizer, pesticides and herbicides on grounds and in or around Town owned buildings that are under the jurisdiction of the Board of Selectmen and Park Commission.

1. Purpose: The purpose of the policy is to codify practices that the Town of Orleans will use to accomplish the following:
 - a. Reduce or eliminate nutrient loading from application of fertilizers on Town owned properties by Town employees or private contractors.
 - b. Reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides or herbicides on town grounds or in or around Town owned facilities.

2. Goals:
 - a. Set a positive example for other fertilizer pesticide and herbicide user groups.
 - b. Demonstrate that properties can be maintained without excessive use of fertilize, phosphorous, pesticides, or herbicides.
 - c. Reduce long term costs.
 - d. To have other Orleans Committee Trustees or Commissions (School Committee, Conservation Commission, and Library Board of Trustees) who have jurisdiction of Town properties or Building adopt the same policy.
 - e. To form a committee that will help educate the citizens of Orleans why we need to significantly reduce the use of nitrogen, phosphorous, pesticides and herbicides in the care and maintenance of properties.

Significant reduction of these products will reduce nutrient loading in our estuaries, eutrophication in our fresh water ponds, protection of our soul source aquifer and health and safety of our children and adults in Orleans.

- f. In the near future adopt the Northeast Organic Farming Association (N.O.F.A.) Standards for Organic Land Care: Practices for Design and Maintenance of Ecological Landscapes. (N.O.F.A. can be googled at [nofa organic land care.net](http://nofaorganiclandcare.net))

This policy if adopted by the Orleans Board of Selectmen/Park Commissioners, School Committee, Orleans Conservation Commission and Library Board of Trustees shall apply to the following spaces owned and managed by the Town:

- Athletic Fields
- Playgrounds
- Grounds of Town Buildings
- Memorial Square
- Traffic Islands
- Parks
- Town Greens
- Cemeteries
- Conservation Areas
- Roadsides

On the date the Board of Selectmen/Park Commissioners adopt this policy the following practices will take effect immediately.

I. Practices for Turf Management

The Board of Selectmen/Park Commissioners hereby adopts the following best practices and require and adherence to the practices by any Town Employees or private contractor working on behalf of the Town.

A. Soil Testing

For any property that is managed with water and/or fertilizer, the Town will conduct soil testing and analysis on a biennial or regular basis. Results of the soil analysis shall be used to enhance soil biology in order to reduce the need for fertilizers or herb/pest control products.

B. Soil Biology

The spreading of composted soil or of microbial products such as compost tea or beneficial nematodes is strongly encouraged as a means of enhancing soil biology.

C. Top Soil and Site Preparation

Any new turf areas developed by the Town should be developed with a minimum of 6 inches of high quality top soil, or in accordance with other profession standards appropriate to the type and planned use of the facility.

D. Grass Type

Whenever possible, hardy and drought resistant grass types such as fine lea fescues (i.e., Hard, chewing, Creeping, Red and Sheep fescues) or minimal mow mixes should be selected so as to minimize the need for watering, mowing or fertilizing. These grass types also should be used when over-seeding established turf areas. Areas intended for special purposes such as athletic fields should use such a grass type appropriate for the intended type and intensity of use.

E. Maintenance Practices

For any property that is managed with water and/or fertilizer the following maintenance practices should be followed:

- Turf areas should be mechanically aerated annually, preferably in the spring;
- Heavily used Athletic Fields such as Eldredge Park, Volunteer Field and Leo P. Miller may require mechanical aeration two or three times annually due to compaction;
- Over-seeding of turf areas should be undertaken every spring or fall. Hardy and drought resistant grass types such as fine leaf fescues (i.e., Hard, Chewing, Creeping, Red and Sheep fescues) and minimal mow mixes should be used for over seeding unless an alternate grass type is required for an athletic field;
- Turf should be mowed to a height of 2.5" inches on the first mowing of the season and 2.25" for the last mowing of the season. At all other times the turf shall be mowed at 3" with the exception of the following: Eldredge Field 2.5" first mow to May 15th, 2" May 15- August 15th, 2.5" August 16 to last mow which will be 2.25". Volunteer field, Leo P. Miller Field, Whitey Dunham L.L. Field 2.5" during the mowing season 2.25 last mow of season.
- Mowed clippings should not be bagged and should be left to mulch.

F. Irrigation

Watering should only be undertaken as necessary. If possible, sprinkler systems should be designed to use on site wells instead of potable water supply. Irrigation

systems should be equipped with rain, moisture, or evapotranspiration sensors, as appropriate.

G. Fertilizer Application

For any property that is managed with water and/or fertilizer the following fertilizer application practices should be followed:

- Only fertilizers with slow release/slowly soluble organic forms of nitrogen should be used. Fertilizer should be applied in the minimum amount needed for healthy plant growth appropriate to the type and intensity of use of the field of turf area;
- Use of compost and compost teas to replace some fertilizer application;
- Fertilizer products should have a minimum of 35% water insoluble nitrogen;
- Fertilizer products containing phosphorous should only be used if required in accordance with the results of a recent soil analysis;
- Fertilizers should be applied to benefit the spring and fall heavy growth periods; Fertilizers should not be applied after October 31st or before April 15th unless required in accordance with the requirements of athletic fields or the results of a soil analysis.

H. Provide a list of areas that will include areas with no fertilizer or areas with one application, two applications or three applications of fertilizer per season.

I. Record Keeping

Record will be kept of turf management practices and applications (i.e. amount and frequency of application, nutrient content) for all fields and turf areas that are managed with irrigation and/or fertilizer.

J. Training

Municipal personnel and contractors involved in turf management will be trained and attend regular training on techniques and best practices associated with organic turf management.

II. Practices for use of pesticides & herbicides

The Board of Selectman/Park Commissioners hereby adopts the following best practices and require adherence to the practices by any Town employee and private contractors working on behalf of the Town.

- A. To develop and follow integrated pest management practices for all land management and building maintenance.
- B. Seek alternative methods to reduce infestation that cause damage to turf, trees and other plant material.
- C. Use an organic pesticide or herbicide if it will effectively reduce the problem to acceptable levels.
- D. If there is no other alternative method or organic product that will eliminate the problems or reduce the problem to acceptable levels then a pesticide or herbicide can be used if approval is voted by the Board, Commission, Trustees or Committee who have the jurisdiction over the Town owned properties.
- E. A plan will be written and submitted to the Board commission or committee who has the jurisdiction so they will place it on their agenda for public awareness. At the public meeting time will be set aside so the public may have input and to hear the reasons any type of pesticides or herbicides needs to be applied, before such board, committee, trustees or commission vote to approve the use of any type of pesticides or herbicides on town properties or around Town Buildings.